

National Statistics: Escherichia coli bacteraemia: annual data

Annual counts and rates of Escherichia coli (E. coli) bacteraemia by acute trust and clinical commissioning group (CCG).

Preventing modern slavery and human trafficking in Romania through digital communication campaigns: call for bids

The deadline for submitting project bids is 28 September 2021.

1. Background

The UK invites project proposals to support the prevention of modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) in Romania through digital communications campaigns. This project is part of a wider British Embassy portfolio of projects which seeks to support the Romanian government and civil society in reducing the drivers of serious and organised crime (SOC) and the ability of organised crime groups to exploit vulnerabilities and re-traffic MSHT victims.

Addressing MSHT and SOC requires international cooperation, since criminal networks know no borders. This is a priority for the British government and British Embassy Bucharest, as Romania is a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking. In 2020 alone, the British referral mechanism registered 368 Romanian victims. Proposals should focus on delivery in Romania.

Previous awareness campaigns have focused on raising awareness but have not always reached the most vulnerable or young people at risk of trafficking because they have not used methods of communication that could directly target these audiences. We know that traffickers use digital tools to reach and then target potential victims, so there is a need for coordinated anti-trafficking campaigns using digital tools, focused on connecting with those most at risk, and providing them with information to protect themselves and identify risks, rather than raising general awareness.

2. Objective

The aim of this project is to partner with the Romanian Government and civil society in delivering a communications campaign that raises awareness about MSHT and reduces the drivers of SOC and the ability of organised crime groups to exploit vulnerabilities.

The main objective is to inform vulnerable individuals about the risk of trafficking (including early signs of abuse that might precede trafficking, for example: emotional, physical, financial, coercive control) and what they can do to safeguard themselves against it, using digital tools to target the most vulnerable.

3. Scope of work

The project should have a national reach, while specifically targeting the vulnerable individuals through online tools.

4. Activities

Activities financed under this project may include:

- designing a campaign to raise awareness about the signs of trafficking and how to protect yourself against it for young audiences
- providing relationship education and helping teenagers recognise the signs of a manipulative/abusive or coercive relationship, in order to reduce 'lover boy' trafficking methods
- running a communications campaign aimed at raising awareness about trafficking, using algorithms and digital marketing tools to target young people within demographics most at risk, and the most commonly used social media platforms by the target age groups
- using online influencers to amplify the communications message

This is not an exhaustive list and the British Embassy welcomes innovative proposals from potential implementing partners which suggest additional or alternative activities to deliver the key objectives.

5. Project approach

Bidders are asked to submit a project proposal which will be approved by the British Embassy Bucharest and will form the basis for project planning. The proposal should set out how the implementing partner will deliver activities to support the objectives set out above with an implementation plan and supporting budget. The British Embassy Bucharest will oversee the project planning and provide the necessary contacts to the implementers.

The project implementer will manage project logistics, including travel plans, lodging, car hiring etc. and is expected to consider the pandemic context and its possible impact on the project implementation when submitting the bid.

The embassy can provide contact persons and focal points for UK institutions or experts that might be needed in the process.

How to bid

Our process will consist of a one-stage full bid proposal. Forms should be completed in English.

You should submit:

Activity-based budgets should list the activities needed to deliver the outcomes (results) of the project and all costs should be in Romanian Lei (RON).

Deadline for submitting project bids is 28 September 2021.

Email completed forms to rsvp.bucharest@fcdo.gov.uk and andrada.petrache@fcdo.gov.uk.

You should state in the subject of the email: name of implementing organisation and title of the project.

6. Reporting

The reports to be produced during the course of this project are to be delivered in English:

- an inception note detailing approach and particular aspects of the activities to be pursued, including a communications plan
- a draft report
- three-monthly financial reports
- the final report, following a facilitated process of commenting

7. Composition of the project teams

A project director, from the part of BE Bucharest (Tanya Collingridge, Deputy Head of Mission) and a project manager (Andrada Petrache, Senior Political Officer), from British Embassy Bucharest, will oversee the project delivery.

Project proposals should demonstrate that the staffing level is appropriate to the aim of the project and that the staff have relevant expertise and experience in MSHT victim support, as well as detailed knowledge of the MSHT situation in Romania.

8. Timing and scope of input

The bidding round is an open and competitive process, assessed by the British Embassy in Bucharest. Results will be issued by early October. Once a bid is approved, a Grant Contract will be signed with the successful bidders. In the documents section you will find an example of a Grant Contract. Your organisation will be expected to sign the contract within one week of the funds being awarded. Failure to do so will result in the funds being re-

allocated. The implementing organisation will be required to submit report updates and a final evaluation of the project.

There are no pre-payments. Reimbursements will be completed once activities have taken place and all receipts submitted. Implementing organisations will request repayments using an invoice (including receipts and a financial report of spend) and the repayments will be carried out during those dates agreed upon in the respective contract.

The budget should be presented in RON. All payments will be made in RON to a bank account held in Romania.

Please send any questions regarding the call for bids to rsvp.bucharest@fcdo.gov.uk and andrada.petrache@fcdo.gov.uk.

It is expected that the project will be carried out from October 2021 to February 2022. The crucial milestones will be the submission of the draft report (February 2022) and the final report (March 2022).

9. Budget

Grant applications must include an estimated budget of up to RON 97,142. Depending on the quality of the proposals, the British Embassy reserves the right not to grant all or part of the available funds. The embassy also reserves the right to award a grant of less than the amount requested by the applicants. In such a case, applicants will be asked to increase the amount that they co-finance, to propose other co-financing means or to decrease the total costs without altering the substance of the proposal.

[Leaseholders freed from costly contract terms](#)

- Countryside Properties to strike out terms that mean ground rents double every 10 to 15 years in latest CMA victory for leaseholders
- Affected leaseholders' ground rents will no longer increase and will remain at the amount charged when they first bought their home
- This comes after Persimmon Homes offered leasehold house owners the opportunity to buy their freehold at a discounted price after the CMA probed their sales practices

Following CMA action, leaseholders with Countryside Properties will no longer be subjected to ground rents that double every 10 or 15 years.

Countryside Properties – one of the UK's leading housing developers – has voluntarily given formal commitments to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to remove terms from leasehold contracts that cause ground rents to

double in price. The effect of these increases, which kick in every 10 to 15 years, is that people often struggle to sell or mortgage their home and their property rights can be at risk, for example, if they fall behind on their rent.

Countryside will also remove terms which were originally doubling clauses but were converted so that the ground rent increased in line with the Retail Prices Index (RPI). The CMA believes the original terms were potentially unfair and should therefore have been fully removed, instead of being replaced with another term that still increases the ground rent.

The move comes after the CMA launched enforcement action against 4 housing developers in September 2020. These were Countryside and Taylor Wimpey, for using possibly unfair contract terms, and Barratt Developments and Persimmon Homes over the possible mis-selling of leasehold homes. The CMA has already secured [commitments from Persimmon and Aviva](#) as part of this action, helping thousands of leaseholders.

Due to the CMA's action, affected Countryside leaseholders will now see their ground rents remain at the original amount – i.e. when the property was first sold – and this will not increase over time. Countryside also confirmed to the CMA that it has stopped selling leasehold properties with doubling ground rent clauses.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

Leaseholders with Countryside can now breathe a sigh of relief knowing they will no longer be forced to pay these doubling ground rents. No one should feel like a prisoner in their home, trapped by terms that mean they can struggle to sell or mortgage their property. We will continue to robustly tackle developers and investors – as we have done over the past 2 years – to make sure that people aren't taken advantage of.

Other developers, such as Taylor Wimpey, and freehold investors now have the opportunity to do the right thing by their leaseholders and remove these problematic clauses from their contracts. If they refuse, we stand ready to step in and take further action – through the courts if necessary.

This is the kind of issue that could be resolved at pace and met with fines if the CMA receives the consumer powers that the Government is currently consulting on.

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

We asked the CMA to investigate the use of unfair practices in the housing market, such as doubling ground rents – and I welcome their continued success in bringing justice to homeowners.

This settlement with Countryside will mean thousands more leaseholders are given the fair treatment they deserve and marks the third major agreement with leading UK developers and investors. I strongly urge others to follow suit and end these historic practices.

We will continue to support leaseholders who may have been mis-sold properties and our new legislation will put an end to this practice for future homeowners, by restricting ground rents in new leases to zero.

As part of its review of the leasehold sector, the CMA is continuing to investigate investment groups Brigante Properties, and Abacus Land and Adriatic Land, after it wrote to the firms earlier this year setting out its concerns and requiring them to remove doubling ground rent terms from their contracts. The CMA's investigation into Barratt Developments and Taylor Wimpey is also ongoing.

For more information on the CMA's ongoing work in the sector and for future updates, please visit the [leasehold case page](#).

Notes to editors

1. These undertakings have been provided to the CMA voluntarily and without any admission of wrongdoing or liability. It should not be assumed that Countryside has breached the law – only a court can decide whether a breach has occurred.
2. Where Countryside has sold the freehold, and cannot remove clauses itself, then it will help get them removed at no cost to leaseholders. This will involve liaising with the current freeholder and making a financial contribution to the freeholder where they give formal commitments to the CMA to remove the clauses.
3. For people who own, or are looking to buy, a leasehold property, [the CMA has produced written and video guidance](#), which offers advice on a number of issues, including what people can do when faced with fees and charges they consider unjustified.
4. The housing developers currently under investigation by the CMA are Taylor Wimpey, for using potentially unfair contract terms that double ground rents every 10 years, and Barratt Developments over the possible mis-selling of leasehold properties. The investors under review are Brigante Properties, and Abacus Land and Adriatic Land. It should not be assumed that any of these firms have breached the law.
5. The main provisions of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's concerns about ground rent terms are the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999 (UTCCRs), for contracts entered into before 1 October 2015, and Part 2 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA), for contracts entered into on or after 1 October 2015. The UTCCRs and Part 2 of the CRA aim to protect consumers against unfair contract terms, and require contract terms to be fair and transparent.

6. The main provisions of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's concerns about mis-selling are the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs). The CPRs aim to protect consumers from unfair commercial practices such as the misleading provision or omission of information as part of sales processes.
 7. As an enforcer under Part 8 of the Enterprise Act 2002, the CMA cannot impose administrative fines for breaches of this consumer protection legislation, but it can enforce the legislation through the courts, and where appropriate, obtain additional measures to improve consumer choice, drive better compliance with the law, or obtain redress for consumers.
 8. The CMA's investigation of potential mis-selling of leasehold properties has benefitted from the support of several local Trading Standards offices which have been the focal point for some consumers to raise their concerns.
 9. All media enquiries should be directed to the CMA press office by email on press@cma.gov.uk, or by phone on 020 3738 6460.
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[World's first green submarine among winners of the UK's biggest clean maritime competition](#)

- green submarine and shipping charge-points powered by offshore wind turbines will receive share of £23 million research and development (R&D) competition
- Maritime Minister supports the opening of the UK's greenest cruise terminal at Southampton Port
- comes as UK sets out intention to eliminate all emissions from shipping by 2050

The first ever green submarine study has been named as one of 55 winning projects of a £23 million government-funded R&D competition, announced today (15 September 2021) by Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, in Greenwich, as part of the [greenest ever London International Shipping Week](#).

The [Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition](#), announced as part of the [Prime Minister's 10 point plan for green industrial revolution](#), is supporting the development of innovative technology to propel the government's commitment to have zero emission ships operating commercially by 2025 – creating hundreds of highly skilled jobs across the nation and establishing the UK as world leaders in clean maritime.

A fully automated net positive submarine fleet, powered entirely on green hydrogen, could help cleanse the oceans of toxic pollution by collecting

microplastics on its pilot route between Glasgow and Belfast. While transporting cargo shipments, the fleet could secure significant emission savings of 27 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the first year of operation, with an overall mission to reduce 300 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions as the fleet grows.

Also among the winners is an all-electric charge-point connected to an offshore wind turbine. The charge-points will be able to power boats using 100% renewable energy generated from the turbine. This offers potential savings of up to 131,100 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions a year – the equivalent of removing over 62,000 cars from our roads.

Similar to roadside electric vehicle chargepoints, these will be operated by semi-automated control, meaning that sailors can moor up by the wind turbine chargepoint, plug in, charge up, then sail on.

Announcing the winners in Greenwich, the heart of British maritime, on the state-of-the-art Royal Navy ship, HMS Albion, the Transport Secretary outlined how this is the latest in a string of government initiatives aimed at cutting emissions in the sector as part of London International Shipping Week – including joining other nations in supporting a world-leading absolute zero target for international shipping emissions by 2050.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

As a proud island nation built on our maritime prowess, it is only right that we lead by example when it comes to decarbonising the sector and building back greener.

The projects announced today showcase the best of British innovation, revolutionising existing technology and infrastructure to slash emissions, create jobs and get us another step closer to our decarbonisation targets.

This comes as Maritime Minister Robert Courts supports the opening of the UK's greenest cruise terminal. The Horizon Cruise Terminal at the Port of Southampton, Europe's leading cruise turnaround port, is the first of its kind, using an innovative mix of solar panel roofing and clean energy shore power plug-in charging for ships – pioneering the way towards greener cruising.

Maritime Minister Robert Courts said:

As the cruising sector bounces back from the pandemic, it's important that our environmental commitments are at the heart of everything we do.

Building state-of-the-art green infrastructure at cruise terminals helps us move towards cleaner cruising, creating more spaces for

these ships to dock and putting us on track to hit net zero by 2050.

Maritime UK chair Sarah Kenny said:

We have always been an island of maritime pioneers and today's competition shows this will long continue with potential to rule the green waves of the future.

Through increased investment and closer collaboration with government our industry can rise to the challenge of steering the UK's vessels in a green direction.

We still have a very long way to go, but today marks an important step towards our journey to net zero.

Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Oceanways, Dhruv Boruah, said:

We would like to thank our Transport Secretary Grant Shapps MP for selecting Oceanways to support the Department for Transport's mission to decarbonise shipping and aid our Prime Minister's commitment to build back better. Time is running out and it is imperative we don't settle for 1% more efficiency in an existing system, but instead, radically rethink to create innovative solutions.

It's not just #JetZero. Oceanways has assembled a world-class team to pioneer #SubZero by creating the new market of net positive underwater transport systems with zero-emission cargo submarines as an innovative tool to decarbonise shipping and clean up our ocean.

Paul Cairns, Managing Director of MJR Power & Automation, said:

We are delighted to have been selected as one of the winners of the Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition, which will enable us to demonstrate our world-leading technology for offshore charging of vessels, and our commitment to supporting decarbonisation of marine operations.

The support of DfT and [InnovateUK](#) is crucial to delivering net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and we are proud to be recipients of their support.

Simon Edmonds, Deputy Executive Chair and Chief Business Officer, Innovate UK, said:

As the UK prepares to host COP26 in the maritime city of Glasgow, it is great that we can announce funding for these fantastic projects in the marine sector that will help the UK meet its net zero goals.

From this competition we saw a very high level of demand, we have seen the very best of British ideas from all over the country. It is clear that not only does the UK have a great maritime history, but also a bright and greener future, too.

The initiatives follow on from the government's previous commitments outlined in the world-leading [Transport decarbonisation plan](#) to explore the establishment of a dedicated function for creating zero-emission shipbuilding and R&D for autonomous vessel sailings under the function of UK Shore.

Based in DfT, UK Shore will unlock the necessary industry investment in clean maritime technologies, tackling supply- and demand-side barriers, as well as developing infrastructure and consumer confidence in clean maritime technologies.

[Redefining wheeled armoured vehicle mobility](#)

Imagine breaking away from the traditional picture of slow moving heavy tracked armoured vehicles to lighter, faster, more agile and highly fuel-efficient platforms; designed to operate at very high tempo, well within the enemy's decision cycle and with increased survivability through agility, terrain access and tactical manoeuvrability.

This is the vision being realised as part of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and its Mounted Combat Systems research project. A key component of that research has been joint activity between Dstl and global integrated defence and security company, QinetiQ.

Focused on research and risk reduction, the programme aims to significantly enhance the mobility of wheeled military vehicles through the introduction of a number of innovative technologies and design approaches.

Future armoured vehicles will need to operate at a much higher tempo if they are to be effective and survivable on the future battlefield, characterised by deep effects and short 'sensor to shooter' links.

In this context the advantages of wheeled vehicles over tracks are well known; they provide improved ride, higher speeds, higher reliability and fuel efficiency; however traditionally they have lacked the terrain accessibility of tracked platforms which constrains freedom of movement.

One of the key technologies that enables this approach is electric drive. Dstl and QinetiQ are harnessing this capability, taking advantage of the flexibility it can provide to develop high performance active suspension solutions, which not only have long travel and variable ride height but a geometry that allows the wheel base and track to be altered.

In addition, the exploitation of individual wheel torque control provided by QinetiQ's hub drive technology and all wheel steering strategies further enhance stability and off road performance. The resulting technology solutions can provide vehicles with some enhanced and even unique capabilities, including:

- provision of a compact configuration for transportation or operation in urban areas
- good stability at high speeds or on side slopes
- enhanced step climbing
- enhanced gap crossing
- improved soft soil mobility, especially when operating in convoys
- stable and low vibration crew and weapon platform
- ride height that can be optimised for low silhouette or mine stand-off

To demonstrate the potential functionality and capability of novel mobility solutions, Dstl and QinetiQ have built and are progressively upgrading a 1/3 scale 8x8 demonstrator platform – called the Mobility Test Rig (MTR).

[Mobile Test Rig – QinetiQ and Dstl](#)

The aims of building the rig have been to address the key challenges of suspension and drive control software, sensor performance and maximising off road performance.

The MTR in its current build standard will be on display at QinetiQ's stand at industry trade show, DSEi (stand H7 – 510). It has fully articulating suspension, QinetiQ electric drive, advanced multi-wheel steer and wheel traction control. Following this showcase, the final stage of fitting sensors and implementing the full active suspension capability will take place.

The MTR has been presented to the British Army and the significant impact on the capability of future land platforms is recognised.

Plans are being discussed to fully exploit the potential of the technology for near term platforms and in the longer for concepts that are starting to be explored as part of Project Mercury.

Mike Sewart, CTO at QinetiQ, explains:

We have been highlighting the importance of Mission-Led Innovation

and this is a perfect example of that approach in practice.

Two years ago we announced this joint research programme. Through a highly focussed programme of innovation, implemented with a clear outcome in mind, in just 24 months we have, alongside a strong ecosystem of partners, designed this demonstrator to showcase how electric drive is a key enabler for future armoured wheeled vehicle success in land environments.

William Suttie, the Dstl technical lead said,

This project is not just about improving the off road mobility of wheeled platforms but has the potential to transform how future armoured vehicles are designed and used.

The ability to move quickly and safely across all types of terrain and provide a stable platform so the crew can operate effectively on the move will enhance tempo and operational freedoms and contribute significantly to survivability.